

work on weekends, and contracted shifts) was also considered important for retaining experienced RNs. Participation in decision-making was also reported fairly frequently as an effective strategy for keeping experienced RNs.

It is interesting to note that good pay was the retention strategy most frequently mentioned by hospitals and second among staff RNs employed in hospital in-patient settings. Therefore, hospitals and nurses seem to be in agreement that a strong pay scale is an effective retention policy. Furthermore, hospitals and RNs in hospital in-patient settings also rated highly a management's willingness to accommodate scheduling needs as an effective retention strategy. Note, however, that only 24% of North Carolina hospitals said they found competitive wages to be an effective retention strategy, and only 16% mentioned flexible scheduling. This suggests that the actual number of hospitals using these strategies is probably much smaller than it should be.

There are also areas where what hospitals think are effective strategies and what staff nurses cite as reasons to stay with an employer seem to be far apart. Among staff RNs and LPNs employed in hospitals, having good mentors/colleagues and good relations with physicians were among the top reasons for staying with their hospital, yet having a positive collegial environment was mentioned as an effective retention strategy only 10 times by hospitals. This is definitely one area hospitals should investigate if they are interested in developing more enticing work environments for nurses.

Long Term Care Facility Strategies for Retaining LPN and RN Staff Nurses

When asked to share effective strategies for retaining LPNs and RNs, 109 long term care facilities reported a total of 169 strategies (see Table 8). The top five strategies parallel those identified by hospitals as effective for retaining staff nurses.

Again, good pay was listed most frequently by long term care facilities as a retention strategy for RNs and LPNs. Flexible scheduling was listed with equal frequency. There were too few RNs employed in nursing homes in our survey to be able to use them for comparison, but among staff LPNs we surveyed, the second most frequently cited reason for staying with their long term care employer was good pay. This shows one area of agreement between long term care employers and LPN staff nurses in long term care on what is important for effective retention. On the other hand, 53% of LPNs employed in nursing homes or rehabilitation facilities cited good benefits as a reason for staying. Yet, offering good benefits as a retention strategy made up only 3% of all strategies mentioned by long term care facilities. It is possible that employers do offer good benefits, but do not recognize the value that their benefit packages have to LPN staff nurses. If this is the case, it would be in the best interest of long term care facilities to become aware of the reasons RN and LPN staff nurses give for staying with the same employer to avoid unwitting changes to components of the work environment that contribute to retention.